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TAGS: [PBTS](#) [UNSC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#)  
SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN ROHRBACHER'S MEETING WITH TADIC

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MICHAEL POLT, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (c) Congressman Rohrabacher's (R-CA) April 13-14 visit to Belgrade was dominated by a candid meeting with President Tadic on April 13. Tadic used the meeting to urge the Congressman not to move forward with a resolution supporting the Ahtisaari plan and supervised independence for Kosovo. Tadic said that in order for him to be able to pursue his vision of maintaining a strategic partnership with the U.S. in the aftermath of a Kosovo status decision, he would need to have a reservoir of policymakers in the US who he could portray to the Serbian people as sensitive to Serbia and its interests, and that a resolution now would tie the Congress to the administration policy and not allow for him to create room to work with US policymakers after Kosovo. The Congressman reiterated that there is absolute unity between the legislative and executive branches on Kosovo, but said he would make every effort to ensure that the resolution included language that highlighted the importance of continued positive U.S.-Serbian relations.

¶2. (c) Speaking more broadly, Tadic acknowledged that Serbia was atoning for the past sins of Milosevic, but drew an analogy to punishing his own children - after six or seven days, he said, his daughter could not understand what she was still being punished for, and ultimately just briefly resented him. He said a Kosovo solution could not create winners and losers - a zero-sum solution would ultimately not be sustainable and would destabilize the region. He acknowledged that both Serbia and the U.S. were striving for stability, but said there was a disconnect in our communication over this. A solution that created stability in the short term for Kosovo, he said, would destabilize Serbia. And a destabilized Serbia would ultimately destabilize the region.

¶3. (c) Tadic went on to say that Kosovo was not simply a question of territory, but of identity. He noted that many in Serbia are now chanting the mantra, "without Kosovo, there is no Serbia." Kosovo, he claimed, is the deeply rooted seat of Serbian culture and religious tradition. He warned against forcing Serbs to make a trade-off of Kosovo for EU membership, emphasizing that EU membership remained a key priority for him.

¶4. (c) Rohrabacher appreciated the context, but noted that the facts on the ground created by Milosevic simply could not be overlooked or overcome. There might have been other solutions to Kosovo status absent Milosevic's atrocities, but now that the well was poisoned, those other options could no longer realistically be considered. Kosovar Albanians simply could not live under Belgrade rule, and quasi-status is not an option. The Ahtisaari plan, Rohrabacher stressed, takes meticulous care of and holds in deep regard Serbia's special relationship with its patrimonial sites in Kosovo. Solving Kosovo, the Congressman maintained, was about the future of Serbia - the sooner Kosovo is solved, the sooner Serbia's future can begin. In effect, if Serbia "wins" by forestalling a conclusion to Kosovo status, it loses, dooming Serbia to a permanent condition of stasis and dooming Kosovo to permanent instability while the rest of Europe moves forward without it.

¶5. (u) Congressman Rohrabacher did not have the opportunity to clear this message.

